

because we didn't want to be in a position where the bill was sent to the President in August and held up there, but we finished all of our work.

Regrettably, this bill has not been presented to the President because of the efforts on negotiations with the White House to try to get a bill which the President could sign. I repeat, I think it is a mistake, constitutionally and procedurally, to do that. We ought to send the President the bill.

There have been, candidly, concerns within the Republican leadership where we have had bicameral meetings between the House and the Senate, the leadership, on precisely what should be done. It is my urging to my colleagues in the Senate and the House that we should stand by our bill of \$106.2 billion, which is as much as the President asked for, and we should stand by our priorities, which give \$600 million more to education. There is no higher priority in America than education. And we should stand by our priority of according \$1.7 billion more to the National Institutes of Health. We should stand by our approach of giving the President what he asked for on teachers and school construction, subject to local determination if the local boards decide they do not want it for those purposes. But we ought not to buy our way out of town and to knuckle to the President and cave to the President. We ought to assert our legislative institutional standing.

This bill could have been presented to the White House in early September. This Senator has pressed consistently in leadership meetings to present the bill to the President. It is my hope we will do that.

I am not unaware of the fact that this is October 17 and that the Presidential election will be held 3 weeks from today. But I think we are dealing with values and principles here, constitutional principles which are paramount, and we ought to assert our legislative prerogatives and submit the bill to the President. There might be an opportunity for a national debate on this subject. Certainly it is worth an effort.

There is no doubt that the President has the so-called bully pulpit, but there is a lot of concern in America on what the funding is going to be for the Departments involved here, not only the Department of Labor but certainly the Department of Education and certainly the Department of Health and Human Services. We ought to lay down a marker. We ought to lay down the gauntlet, and we ought to ask America to join in a debate to see where America's priorities lie.

My own instinct is that we have the high ground here and we have the better case. So I hope the Congress will submit this bill to the President, will engage in that debate, and will assert our constitutional prerogatives to legislate. I think we have a good chance to have this bill finally enacted into law, or if it is vetoed, with some na-

tional debate, something very close to it.

In the absence of any other Senator seeking recognition, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 4461

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to announce to the Senate that agreement has been reached and I am able at the request of the majority leader to make an announcement on the scheduling of votes and other business before the Senate.

I ask unanimous consent the vote on the Agriculture appropriations conference report now occur at 5:30 on Wednesday, October 18, and further, the allotted debate times prior to the vote now occur beginning at 3:30 on Wednesday.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now be in a period of morning business with Senators speaking for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### THE TREAD ACT

Mr. FITZGERALD. Mr. President, I rise today to clarify the history and intent of section 14 of the Transportation Recall Enhancement, Accountability, and Documentation Act, which passed the Senate on Wednesday. This section of the legislation is based on the Child Passenger Protection Act of 2000, which I introduced on February 10, 2000 with my colleague from Arkansas, BLANCHE LINCOLN, and my colleague from Pennsylvania, RICK SANTORUM.

The purpose of the Child Passenger Protection Act of 2000 is to enhance children's safety in motor vehicles. It calls for the adoption of improved child restraint safety performance standards and testing requirements, and it requires the Secretary of Transportation to provide parents with better consumer information about child restraints.

Child deaths in motor vehicle crashes in the United States have declined some since 1975, but significant work remains to be done in the area of child passenger safety. Motor vehicle crashes are the single leading cause of death and serious injury for young children in the United States.

Each year, up to 600 children under the age of five die in car crashes, and

up to 70,000 are injured as occupants in motor vehicle crashes. Motor vehicle crashes cause about one of every three injury deaths among children 12 and younger in this country.

A child restraint that is installed and used correctly can prevent many injuries and deaths. The failure of some consumers to use age- and weight-appropriate child restraints has been well documented. Many consumers who purchase and use child restraints have little guidance or information with which to distinguish among the broad array of models, sizes, shapes and features of child restraints that are being sold in retail stores.

A child restraint that is well designed can prevent still more child injuries and deaths. The former top safety official at the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA), Dr. Ricardo Martinez, stated, in a letter dated September 14, 1999 to all manufacturers of child restraints sold in the United States: "[m]any restraints have been engineered to barely comply with some of the most safety-critical requirements of the [Federal] standard." NHTSA also has questioned the efforts of some child restraint manufacturers to have child restraint defects characterized as "inconsequential" to avoid recall campaigns, and the agency recently suggested that child restraints be assigned safety ratings.

NHTSA is the agency within the United States Department of Transportation that monitors the safety of child restraints. NHTSA's primary method for verifying that a child restraint is designed to meet Federal safety standards is its compliance testing program. In compliance tests, Federal regulators subject the child restraint to a sled test that simulates a frontal collision with a stationary object.

The sled test used by NHTSA to verify a child restraint's performance does not consider how that restraint will perform in rear-impact, rollover, or side-impact crashes; and the sleds used in government compliance tests bear limited resemblance to the interiors of today's passenger vehicles. These sleds feature flat bench seats with lap belts that were common in automobiles of the mid-1970s, but which do not apply to many of the passenger vehicles that are on our roads these days.

Child restraints are too often marketed for children who are heavier than the anthropomorphic test dummies used by NHTSA in these sled tests. One private group's testing has shown that child restraints tested with a child at the highest weight recommended by the manufacturer have failed. NHTSA should allow child restraints to be marketed for children at specific weights only if the restraint has been tested at those weights.

The current Federal standard for child restraints, known as Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 213, is overdue to be upgraded to better reflect new developments in technology.